MOSLEM TEMPLE

PRESENTS

"A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HOT SANDS."

MOSLEM TEMPLE

Published by Moslem Temple, Detroit, Michigan 1974

FORWARD

It is impossible to find the real story of the Masonic fraternity in the annual report of its Grand Lodges, its financial statements or in the minutes of its many meetings—just as it is impossible to understand America from tables of statistics on the births and deaths of its citizens,
its gross national product or yearly imports and exports.

The masonic fraternity, like a nation, is no better, no worse, no stronger, and no weaker than the men who founded it, work in its behalf, plan its future and guide its destiny. In the final analysis, the Masonic fraternity is flesh and blood—and something more. That something more is the spirit which almost mystically is breathed into the Masonic Orders by the work, dreams, aspirations and personalities of men.

Thus it was with a group of dedicated Masons who founded the "Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine." The Order took as its ritual the "Fire and Sand" of the desert which was the birthplace of the world's three great religions. "Fire and Sand" is a way of life in that far-off land. These are also the human qualities enabling industries to be built, the spanning of oceans and opening of frontiers, nations to progress, and the continuation of our beloved Masonic Order.

The story of the Crippled Childrens' Hospitals and Burns Institutes—some 22 in all—and the wonderful restoration of children to a more useful life would fill many volumes, and is told elsewhere.

This book deals with the ritual you witness as you enter the Shrine. As in all other Lodges of the Great Masonic fraternity, all of its work, dress and customs are based on factual history, the Holy Bible, and a belief in a Supreme Being.

What folows will give you a better understanding of the drama you see unfolding before you as you become a Noble of the Mystic Shrine.

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THE MIDDLE EAST IN ANCIENT TIMES

With the march of civilization across Europe and the New World, the Middle East—the region between the eastern Mediterranean and India—for a time became somewhat isolated and eclipsed. Yet at one time that region was the center of the civilized world. Indeed, with neighboring Minoan Crete, it was the whole world then known to civilized man except for ancient China and the Indus valley. It was in the Middle East that mankind's first steps were taken in the direction of organized social and community life. It was there that man first developed sciences, arts and skills for an intelligent solution to the problems of existence. These are the lands of the Bible, the birthplace of three great religions, all based on the worship of one God.

Americans are inclined to regard the discovery of the New World in 1492 as a long time ago, and the birth of Christ as occurring in ancient times. But in comparison with the less than 500 years of New World history, the Middle East measures its history in thousands of years. Christ was born into a civilization whose history was then at least twice as long as the period since His birth. When Abraham, who antedated Christ by about 2,000 years, was born, by tradition at Ur of the Chaldees, that city had been a civilized community for thousands of years. When Moses lived in Egypt, the pyramids were already monuments of antiquity.

In Mesopotamia, where civilization early reached a high level, there was from remote times an elaborate irrigation system which made the plains a prosperous region of farms and cities, and there was extensive trade with Arabian Gulf towns and with India. Despite changes of fortune through many periods of history, some of the ancient cities were occupied continuously until the Mongol invasion in 1258. In this disaster whole populations were slaughtered and the irrigation system upon which they depended was destroyed. Thus was eclipsed a civilization which had lasted for more than 5,000 years.

From time to time until the modern era of industrial development, the Middle East lived largely in poverty without the productivity or strength to achieve an effective recovery. During the period when Western countries were making rapid progress in the settlement of new lands and in the arts, commerce and industry, the peoples of the Middle East had little to contribute either to their own prosperity or to world affairs. Their long history of civilization and culture, however, had left them with a tradition which manifested itself in gracious hospitality and social relations, in a deep sense of responsibility for their acts and for their relations with family and neighbors and an age-old wisdom of religion and custom.

THE BIRTH OF ISLAM

One of the most amazing episodes in the experience of mankind was the birth of a new faith, Islam. From humble beginnings it first enkindled the town and desert peoples of the Arabian peninsula and then swept over most of the civilized world. It brought forth one of the most brilliant periods of art and culture that the world has known. It remains today the vital faith of some 350,000,000 people.

At the time of the birth of Muhammad at Mecca, about A.D. 570, the Western world was in a state of decadence and unrest. The Roman Empire, which had controlled the world in the first few centuries of the Christian era, had succumbed long since to the onslaught of European barbarians. Its successor, the Christian Byzantine Empire centered at Constantinople, had been engaged with the Sassanid Empire of Persia in wars which had exhausted both. It was a disorganized world into which Muhammad was born. His teachings spread not only because they were propagated with zeal by his followers, but also because they offered a refreshing new outlook to many misgoverned and disheartened people.

Arabia had been in a state of anarchy, with constant tribal feuds and fights and occasional religious persecutions, such as that of the Christians by the Jews in the southwestern part of the country. The majority of the Arabs still worshipped pagan gods. Even before the rise of Islam, Mecca was a sacred city, the site of a temple, the Ka 'bah. Large pilgrimages were made to this shrine, and at that time, as today, the Pilgrimage was one of the sources of revenue for the residents of Mecca.

The Prophet Muhammad was born, according to tradition, in the Year of the Elephant, so named because it was the year when Mecca was being threatened by the Abyssinian army accompanied by an elephant. Muhammad belonged to the clan of Hashim in the tribe of Quraish, whose members were custodians of the Ka 'bah. Even before this birth there had been a rift between his clan and another Quraishite clan known as the Umayyads. This rift foreshadowed a great schism in the ranks of Islam after his death.

Muhammad was the son of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib of Mecca. His mother, Aminah, was a daughter of the tribe of Quraish. Little is known of the first forty years of his life except that he became an orphan at an early age, was reared by his grandfather and by an uncle, and at the age of twenty-five married a rich widow, Khadijah, fifteen years his senior, whose caravans he successfully managed. He spent a portion of his boyhood among the Bedouins and from them learned the simplicity of life and the purity of speech of the desert.

About the age of forty Muhammad began to have revelations. He became

convinced that God has chosen him to perfect the religion earlier revealed to Abraham, the prophets of Israel and Jesus. Among his initial converts were his wife, his first cousin 'Ali (later also his son-in-law), and another kinsman Abu Bakr (later also one of his fathers-in-law), a leader among Quraish. Other leaders of Quraish were jealous and suspicious of Muhammad's teachings, which threatened their vested interest in the pilgrim trade.

Muhammad continued to make converts, mostly among poor people and slaves. The hostility against him twice grew to a point where he advised his followers to take refuge in Christian Abyssinia. At length his enemies plotted to murder him; but he was forewarned, and Ali, his cousin, heroically lay in Muhammad's bed feigning sleep when the would-be murderers arrived. Meanwhile Muhammad, accompanied by Abu Bakr, fled to a nearby mountain cave, and after two nights continued on to Medina, then known as Yathrib. The way had been prepared in the previous year by a compact between the Prophet and leaders of Medina.

The year of this transfer to Medina, the Hijrah (commonly written Hegira), was later taken as Anno Hegirae or A.H. 1 of the Muslim calendar (A.D. 622). At that time Muhammad was fifty-one.

Muhammad's teachings were widely accepted in his new home except by local Judaized Arabs. The new faith began to spread also to other parts of Arabia. The people of Mecca, however, remained hostile, and a number of battles were fought before they came to terms. In 629, Muhammad returned to Mecca as its master. By the time he died, in 632, large numbers of people in all parts of Arabia had embraced the faith of Islam.

Late in life Muhammad began thinking of extending his work beyond the borders of Arabia, and his followers proceeded to put this idea into effect. After quelling some rebellious elements in the country, including eastern Arabia, they started forth with an army of from 3,000 to 4,000 men on campaigns that were to lead to extensive conquests. As the movement gathered momentum, the numbers were swelled from newly converted populations outside Arabia.

As previously mentioned, Islam is the religious faith of some three or four hundred million people living in lands stretching from the west coast of Africa to the southwest Pacific. It is the predominant faith in North Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan and Indonesia.

The religion of Islam is not, as some people believe, a profound departure from the other religions which originated in the Middle East—Judaism and Christianity. On the contrary, the three religions have much in common.

The histories of all three religions have contained stores of fanaticism, intolerance and ruthlessness in dealing with heretics and infidels. Though not representative of the true religions, these stories have often been overemphasized by enemies and cynics, and so has it been with Islam.

The image built up by medieval crusading propaganda still lingers on among Western people in the form of false impressions of Islam and the Muslims. The discussion which follows has the object of promoting a better understanding.

Muslims believe fervently that theirs is the only true faith and that they are charged with spreading it throughout the world. Yet they have not been as intolerant of other religions as it is commonly believed. Islam was spread widely as the result of conquests, but contrary to popular belief it was not generally imposed upon the conquered by terror or even by force. The conquerors were ardent missionaries. They offered new hope and a new faith in what was then a generally decadent and misgoverned world. Muslim missionaries also have made and are still making countless conversions in many countries never invaded by Muslim armies. In the countries conquered by the Arabs, communities of other faiths—Christian and Jewish, for example—were allowed to continue their separate religious existence.

As its Arabic name implies, Islam is a religion of submission to the will of God. Man is viewed as an instrument for carrying out that will, which is supreme in the governance of all earthly affairs. One who submits himself unreservedly to God's will and obeys the precepts He has laid down for mankind is a Muslim, a follower of Islam.

The Arabs, as well as the Jews, regard Abraham as their patriarch. According to Arab tradition, the Arabs descended from Abraham's first son, Ishmael, while the Hebrews descended from his second son, Isaac. This tradition agrees with the account in the Book of Genesis. The Arabs are sometimes called Ishmaelites.

According to Muslims, elements of their religion were revealed through a long line of Prophets, including Abraham (Ibrahim), Moses (Musa) and Jesus ('Isa), but the full and final revelation was given to Muhammad and later embodied in written form as the Koran. The Koran, which Muslims regard as the word of God Himself, is therefore the chief source for Islamic doctrines and practices. For interpretation of the Koran and for guidance on matters not dealt with in that book, the Muslim refers to the acts and sayings of the Prophet (the Sunnah) as recorded in a vast body of traditions known as the Hadith.

Islam pervades the whole life of the community of its faithful. In a Muslim country such as Saudi Arabia, which recognizes the law of Islam (the Shari' ah) as its fundamental code, religious law prevails in the numerous matters which in other states fall within the province of civil law.

Although the Shari' ah law governing questions of human relations and conduct has been elaborately developed, the Islamic religion itself is extemely simple and personal. There are no rites or ceremonies performed by priests or ministers. Indeed, there are no priests or ministers

or congregations like those in the Christian churches. The Muslims spend much time discussing religion, and men who are well versed and eloquent may acquire great influence. Such men, of whom Shaikh Muhhamad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhd was an outstanding example, might be considered preachers. There are Imams to lead believers in prayer, who do just that and no more, and there are Qadhis as religious judges; but the religious concept is one of direct relationship between the individual and God without any earthly intercessor or intermediary. The simple ceremonies of the prayers and pilgrimage are performed by each person as an individual, although joining with others in worship or the Meccan rites is deemed to be meritorius.

The mosques, many of which are imposing and beautiful, are sanctified places for Muslims to pray in. There is a sermon (khutbah) only on Fridays at the noon worship and on special occasions. There is no instrumental or vocal music. The leader of the prayers simply chants verses of the Koran. The religion of a good Muslim pervades every hour of his life. There are few moments in an ordinary conversation which do not contain references to God. God is always present and controls everything.

THE PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

The great majority of the foreign pilgrims enter the country at Jiddah, where they may spend a few days before proceeding to Mecca. Jiddah is a very busy city during the pilgrim season. At that point pilgrims are assigned in groups to their mutawwifs, professional guides who are reponsible for the spiritual and material welfare of the pilgrims in their charge. The mutawwifs and their assistants arrange lodgings and advise the pilgrims in their religious rites, and minister to their other needs during their stay in the Holy Land. They represent an old and important profession in Mecca.

In former years the majority of the pilgrims travelled from Jiddah to Mecca in litters on camelback. Some of the poorer ones still travel in this way, or even on foot. Now, however, there is a paved road over this 46-mile route, and buses and automobiles have largely replaced the picturesque camel trains of former years.

A few miles from Mecca stand two markers (al- 'Alamain), denoting the boundary of the sacred territory beyond which non-Muslims may not pass.

The pilgrims enter Mecca preferably on foot and preferably, although not necessarily, in the daytime. As soon as possible thereafter they commence the pilgrimage ceremonies.

The most sacred place of the Holy City is the Ka 'bah, a stone building, cubical in shape, about 45 feet high, which stands in the great courtyard of the Sacred Mosque. It is shrouded in a covering of black silk, beautifully embroidered with inscriptions in ornamental Arabic characters. Set in the southeast corner of the Ka 'bah is the sacred Black Stone which is believed to have been sent down by God from heaven in ancient times as a sign to men. It is about 12 inches in diameter, black in color, with a reddish hue, and surrounded by a silver collar. The kisses of countless pilgrims over centuries of time have worn it smooth. If the crowds about the stone are too great, the pilgrim may touch the stone with a stick and kiss the stick or even salute the stone with his hands and kiss his hands.

The Arabs, in tracing their ancestry back to the patriarch Abraham, believe that Abraham and Ishmael built the Ka 'bah. In the courtyard of the Great Mosque is the Station of Abraham, which is believed to contain the stone upon which they stood while building the shrine. Nearby is the well of Zamzam, the water of which saved the life of Ishmael as a child.

Chapters 16 and 21 of the Book of Genesis tell the Biblical form of the story. Hagar, the Egyptian handmaiden of Abraham's wife Sarah, bore him a son (Ishmael) after Sarah had despaired of having any children. In her old age, however, Sarah was blessed with a son (Isaac) and refused to harbor Hagar and Ishmael any longer in the household. The Lord told

Abraham to "hearken unto her voice," but not to worry about his son, "for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is they seed." Accordingly, Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness with bread and a bottle of water, which soon ran out. In her despair, and unable to bear the sight of his final suffering, she placed the child in a bush. Then Gabriel, the Angel of God, said unto her: "What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink."

According to the Muslim version of the story, the place in the wilderness where this incident occurred is within the present site of Mecca. Before the angel Gabriel appeared, Hagar had run back and forth seven times between two hills, called al-Safa and al-Marwah, in her search for water. The well that Gabriel showed her was the well of Zamzam, from which pilgrims now drink as one of the rites of the pilgrimage ceremony.

The well in time became filled in, but according to tradition it was rediscovered and reopened by the grandfather of the Prophet Muhhamad, who in turn was told in a vision that it would furnish water to all pilgrims. The well is held in great reverence. According to a tradition of the Prophet, "Fever comes from the boiling of Hell, but the water of Zamzam will cool it." Another Arab proverb enumerates the five acts of virtue: "Looking into the Koran, looking at the Ka 'bah, looking up to one's parents, looking into Zamzam, and looking the world in the face."

THE FIVE PRIMARY DUTIES

Five primary duties known as the Five Pillars of the faith, are required of a Muslim.

The first pillar—the profession of faith—consists of repeating the basic formula, which is a euphonious utterance in Arabic—La ilaha illa Allah—"There is no god but God," to which is added, "Muhammad is the Messenger of God."

The second pillar of the faith is Prayer. Muslims pray five times a day—before dawn, at midday, in the latter part of the afternoon, at sunset and in the evening. The washing that precedes the prayer, the words of the worshippers, the number of bows and other parts of the ritual are set out in detail. The worshippers face the Ka 'bah, the House of God in Mecca.

The third pillar of the faith is Zakah, freely translated as obligatory alms. This includes the obligatory religious tax paid to the government for charitable works, as well as personal and voluntary gifts to the needy. Islam recognizes that the lot of men in life varies and endeavors to lessen the differences that divide men by requiring the rich to devote a share of their substance to the welfare of the poor.

The fourth pillar is Fasting—the Fast of Ramadan, the ninth month of the year. For every day of this month complete abstinence from food and drink, as well as continence in other respects, is enjoined from the moment before dawn when a white thread can be distinguished from a black, until the setting of the sun.

The fifth pillar—the Pilgrimage to Mecca—is set apart from the other four pillars of Islam because it requires a Muslim to perform this act of piety only if he has the means. A Muslim of the purest faith may live and die without ever being able to go to Mecca. But the merit is great for one who goes, for the Prophet Muhammad said in effect that the reward of Paradise awaits one who makes a pilgrimage acceptable to God.

When the pilgrim is ready to leave his house and start on his journey, he recites the prayer for the journey: "O God, Thou art my Companion on the journey, and Thou art the One who remains with my people. O God, roll up the earth for us . . ." At the door of the house another prayer is said, beginning: "In the name of God, I place my trust in God." Upon boarding whatever conveyance he is using, the Pilgrim repeats "Allah akbar" ("God is Greatest") three times.

So it is true with us. No Mason can be any higher or of purer faith than one who has completed the first three degrees—but the merit and reward is great for those who take the pilgrimage on.

THE FEZ

In the Middle East, the key to a man's character may often be sitting on his head. Centuries of blazing sun, desert storms and evening chills, have made wearing a headpiece necessary and stamped them with traditional colors and patterns.

In some cases, it is even possible to tell a man's religion, social class and nationality by what he's wearing on his head.

For example, sheikhs or religious leaders of the Middle East's two great Moslem sects wear different colored scarves wrapped around their turbans—white for Sunni Moslems, green for Shi 'ites.

The wearing of headgear reached its highpoint during the days of the Ottoman empire when what a man put on his head was often rigidly prescribed by law.

Today with the trend to Western dress growing throughout the area, the old traditions are slowly disappearing in the cities, and are almost totally ignored by men under thirty.

But outside Beirut, Cairo, Damascus and Tehran, the old habits are still scrupulously followed.

There are two basic kinds of headgear in the Middle East: the conical, red felt fez or tarboosh as it is called in Arabic, and the flowing desert headdress of Lawrence of Arabia, called a kaffiyah.

Under the Ottoman Turks, the fez was a symbol of advanced social status reserved for pashas, beys, religious leaders and other heads of the community. Gradually it became the badge of the city dwelling white collar worker or merchant, and the village elder.

The fez is in use all over the Middle East with the exception of the Arabian Peninsula. There, in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman and other Persian Gulf sheikdoms, the kaffiyah is worn by all social classes. It can vary from the shabby flapping cloth of a goat herder to the elaborate gold encrusted white silk headdresses of Arab princes.

Basically, the kaffiiyah is a piece of cloth about a yard square which is folded in half, then placed over the head to cover the hairline, and allowed to flow down the wearer's back. It is kept in place by rope-like strands of black goat's hair piled one on another and called an agal. The ordinary agal is round. But in Saudi Arabia, a dignitary's agal will be squared with three or four strands instead of the usual two, and the squaring frame often made of gold.

Probably the most famous kaffiyah is the red and white checked traditional headdress of Jordan's Arab Legion. So devoted were the legionnaires to their headdress that they frequently refused to swap it for a steel helmut

during the Arab-Israeli war. Palestinian refugees often wear a blue and white checked kaffiyah.

The kaffiyah is tremendously practical. It gives the wearer maximum protection from the sun, and can be whipped around his face leaving only a slit open for his eyes in a desert dust storm.

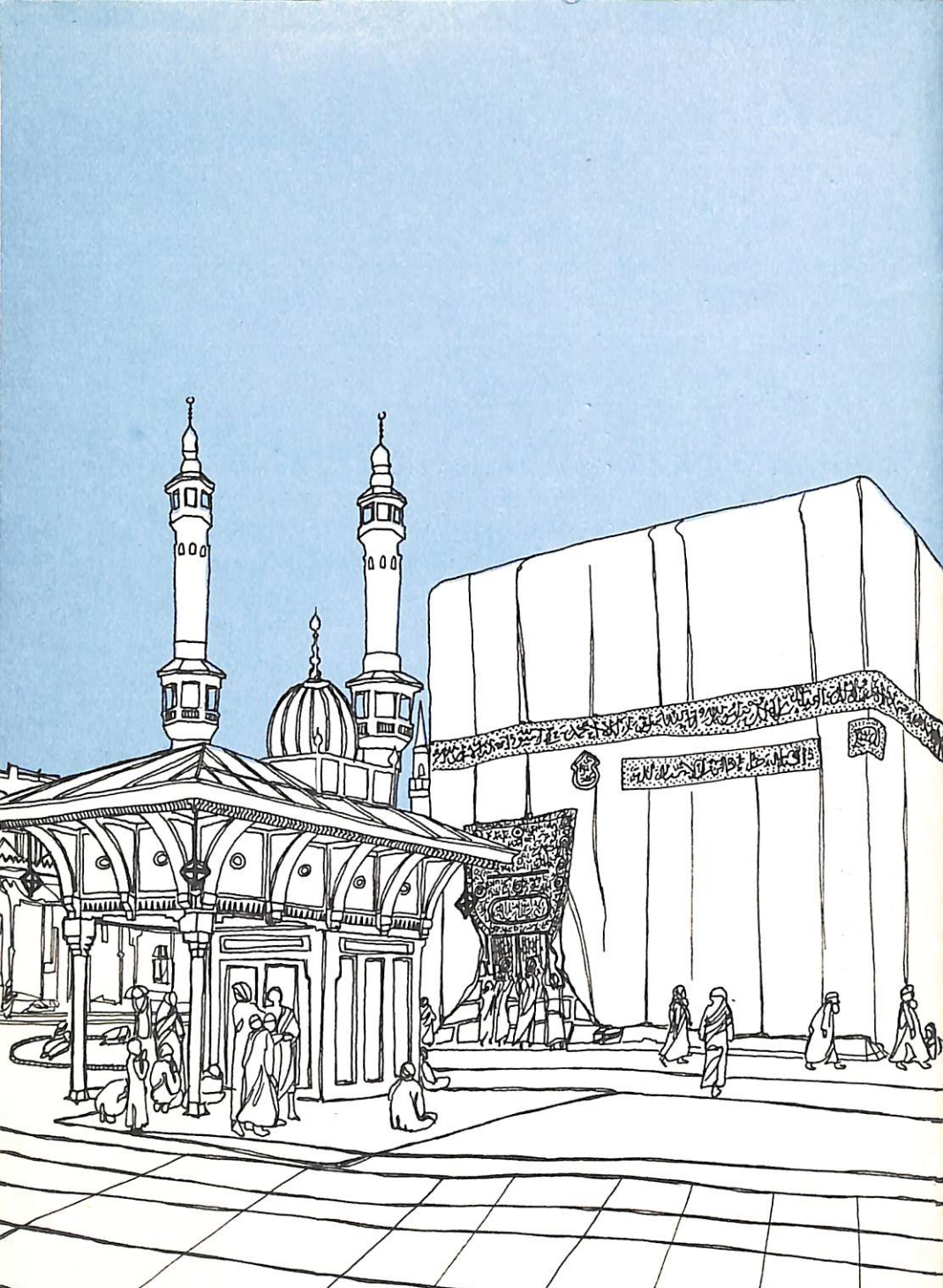
The fez is not only worn by itself, but forms the basis for the Arab turban. When it is being worn as a turban, a skullcap, or taqiyah is placed underneath. Then a long scarf is wrapped layer after layer around the fez. The folds are usually at least an inch thick and come up even with the edges of the fez, but leave its red top exposed. Some scarves are wrapped thin at the base and thick at the top to give them a flaring, top-heavy look.

A Sunni Moslem sheikh or holy man is entitled to wear a white scarf; among Shi 'ites, who give primary religious allegiance to Ali, the Prophet Mohammed's first male heir, holy men wear green as well as any man who claims to be descended from the prophet's family, no matter what his class.

In Iraq, members of the devil-worshipping Yazidis who hate the color blue, wear red scarves.

Moslem laymen who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca are entitled to wear a beige, gold encrusted band of cloth two inches high at the base of their fez.

Statement	Meaning	Use
is-salaam 'alaykum	Peace be upon you.	Universal Arab greeting
wa- 'alaykum is-salaam	And upon you be peace	(The reply.)
sabaaH il-khayr	Morning of goodness.	Good morning.
sabaaH in-nuwr	Morning of light.	(The reply.)
masaa' il-khayr	Evening of goodness.	Good evening or afternoon.
masaa' in-nuwr	Evening of light.	(The reply.)
kayf Haalak?	How are you?	
Tayyib, il-Hamdu lillaah!	Fine, praise be to God!	
min faDlak	Please.	Used when requesting a thing or service.
tafaDDal	Please.	Offering a thing or service.
mashkuwr (or shukran or ashkurak)	Thank you.	
mamnuwn	You're welcome.	
fiy amaan illaah	(Go) in the care of God.	Good-by.
fiy amaan il-kariym	(Go) in the care of The Generous One	(The reply.)



The Station of Abraham (foreground), in the courtyard of the Great Mosque in Mecca, is believed to contain the stone upon which the patriarch Abraham and his son Ishmael stood while constructing the Ka'bah (background).